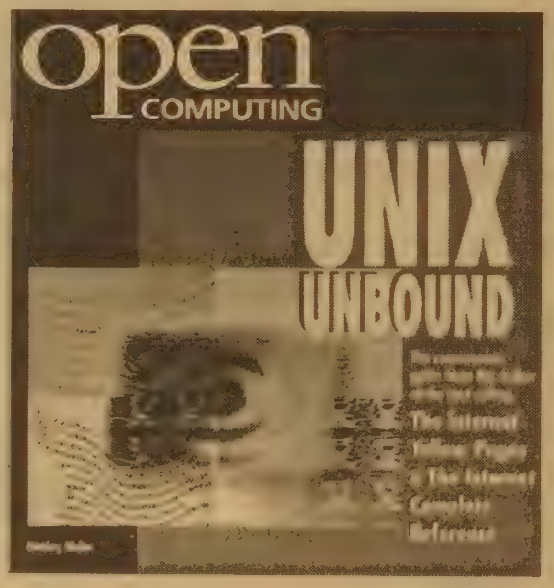
BY KEVIN SAVETZ

Help For UNIX Beginners

Two new books for the UNIX user.

The UNIX operating system—granddaddy of MS-DOS and long-time backbone to most everything that happens on the Internet—has been around for twenty five years or so. A lot has already been written about UNIX, but publishers continue to grind out books about this obtuse, sometimes cryptic operating system. Two of the latest books in this arena take a very different angle on UNIX.

UNIX Unbound, by prolific computerist Harley Hahn, is meant to take the newbie by the hand and bring them up to speed to the fundamentals of UNIX. It's almost frighteningly thick, approaching 800 pages, but is consistently thorough and accurate.

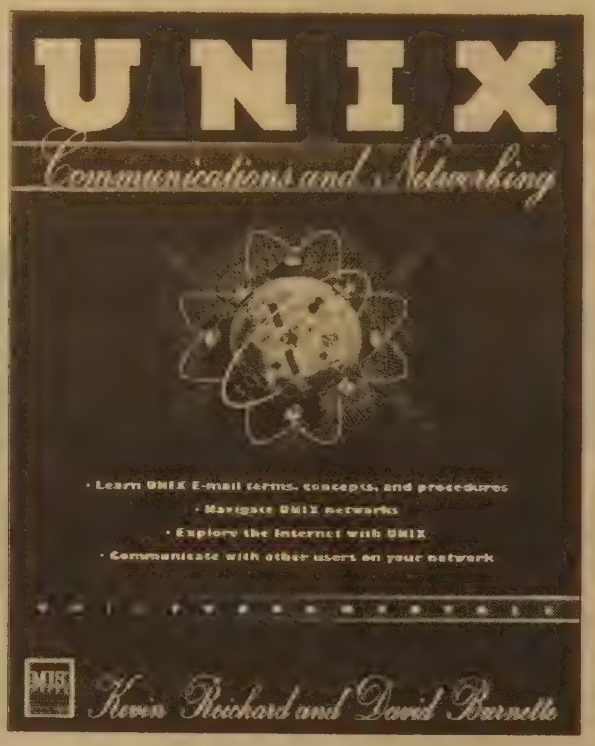


UNIX Unbound
BY HARLEY HAHN
Osborne/McGraw Hill

It is aimed primarily at those who will be accessing UNIX through a character-based interface rather than those sitting down in front of a graphical X terminal. There is only a single chapter on X Window, and presents a cursory understanding of how to start X and move around with it. The authors do a much better job dealing with the character-based interface, and cover the two standard flavors of UNIX: System V and Berkeley.

UNIX Unbound's structure takes a no-nonsense, start-to-finish tack in teaching the reader the way of UNIX—getting connected, using the keyboard, running programs you will want to use right away, reading online manuals, the UNIX "shell" interface (three different shells are covered), using the editors, working with files, and so on. Hahn handles each section thoroughly, but is reluctant to go back to a topic later in the book. As a result, complex concepts and tasks are sometimes covered earlier than perhaps they should be, and some relatively important tasks—like how to move between directories and delete files—aren't covered until very late in the book.

The organization and style of *UNIX Unbound* is better suited to those willing to spend some time learning the intricacies of the system rather than readers who just want to learn quickly how to log in, compose a letter, then email, and print it. If you're willing to dig in, *UNIX Unbound* will put you on the track to a strong understanding and familiarity with UNIX.


UNIX
Communications and Networking
• Learn UNIX E-mail terms, concepts, and procedures
• Navigate UNIX networks
• Explore the Internet with UNIX
• Communicate with other users on your network
Kevin Reichard and David Burnette

UNIX Communications and Networking
BY KEVIN REICHARD AND DAVID BURNETTE
MIS Press

UNIX Communications and Networking, by Kevin Reichard and David Burnette, is a book with a more specific goal. It's also directed at the UNIX beginner, but it's goal is to show the reader how to harness UNIX for communicating with others. Since the Internet is the de facto standard for networking and communicating with UNIX, Reichard and Burnette spend a lot of time discussing Internet tools, including USENET, email, telnet, and UUCP. The book is readable and breezy—it explains the concepts, defines the jargon, and explores the possibilities without getting bogged down in details.

Another way to put it is this: the book will make you understand the concepts and even get you going with simple UNIX networking tools—like electronic mail, USENET newsreaders, finger, FTP, and telnet. It doesn't, however, touch on slightly more complex issues and problems such as how to find a newsreader if one isn't already installed on your system, or popular alternatives to the talk command, should your version of talk not be compatible with the version used by the person with whom you want to talk.

UNIX Communications and Networking is an excellent starter to communicating on UNIX, but it just skims the surface. It won't replace a full-fledged Internet book (like *UNIX Unbound*) or a complete Internet book, but it can put you on the fast track to using email, and USENET, as well as understanding UUCP and other basics.

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